

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel) and Congressman Jon Porter (R-Nev.), co-chairs of the Congressional Travel and Tourism Caucus, hosted a roundtable on Tuesday to discuss how the travel industry affects the U.S. economy. The caucus is a group of 99 bi-partisan members of Congress with the goal of promoting the travel industry within the halls of Congress.

The roundtable brought 16 travel industry leaders to Washington to meet with top members of Congress and two members of the president's Cabinet. Industry leaders had the opportunity to put voice to their key issues and priorities for the next administration.

"The Travel and Tourism Caucus is really growing into the role that Congressman Porter and I envisioned 18 months ago when he joined me as co-chair," said **Rep. Farr**. "The roundtable brought some of the most important lawmakers and members of the president's Cabinet together for a very substantive conversation with top travel execs, and I think everyone took something away from the table. I look forward to working with Congressman Porter as we strengthen this caucus even further, and I see great success ahead."

Travel and tourism is the Central Coast's second largest industry, generating more than \$2 billion and creating more than 18,000 jobs. It is California's eighth largest industry, generating \$84 billion in spending and more than 834,000 jobs. Travel is critical to the American economy and a vital international public diplomacy tool. Nationwide, travel accounted for around \$740 billion in direct travel expenditures for 2007, including domestic and international travel. It also created \$110 billion in tax revenue for local, state and federal governments.

"The impact of the travel industry is staggering, yet its contributions go largely unnoticed on Capitol Hill," said **Rep. Porter**. "The intention of today and the mission of the caucus is to continue to elevate travel and tourism as a priority for this and future Congresses. Today's discussion was not only a chance to discuss national policy for the travel industry but also an opportunity to develop relationships with key policymakers. By bringing together all these interested parties, it is our hope to maintain a collaborative dialogue on the many issues facing this multi-billion dollar industry and set our priorities for the 111th Congress."

"The travel community applauds Representatives Farr and Porter for their efforts in

promoting the economic benefits of travel," said **Roger Dow**, president and CEO of the Travel Industry Association. "Today's roundtable with top Congressional and Administration leaders opened an important dialogue on the critical problems facing America's travel economy."

Government officials: Secretary of Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez, Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, Minority Leader John Boehner, Minority Whip Roy Blunt, Transportation Committee Chairman Jim Oberstar, Transportation Committee Ranking Member John Mica and Ways and Means Committee Ranking Member Jim McCrery.

Travel industry leaders: Caroline Beteta, CEO of the California Travel and Tourism Commission and National Chair of the Travel Industry Association; Roger Dow, President and CEO of the Travel Industry Association; Alan Feldman, Senior VP, Public Affairs of MGM Mirage; Tim Maland, Director of Nevada Commission on Tourism; Kathleen Matthews, Executive VP of Marriott International; Rossi Ralenkotter, President & CEO of the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority; Jim Shaughnessy, Senior VP of Orbitz Worldwide; Jonathan Tisch, Chairman of Loews Hotels and Travel Business Roundtable.

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